/74 cont./ 186
white ethnic groups. This is a culture contact phenomonon, 515
arising from the need of the natives to act out their animosity 648
toward the European intruders. As few white visitors ever learn [154]
more than a few words of the native language, it is quite safe for the natives to refer to white visitors by terms such as those listed above. I have seen Marquesans return the greetings of French and American tourists with such appellations, displaying perfect poker faces all the while. Much is made of "lax" European bathing habits; to escape disapprobation, one must bathe as frequently and as thoroughly as the Marquesans and be extremely careful of perspiration odor.

Skin eruptions are very common among the Marquesans, 164
providing a further source for terms of insult. Some of the 192
most common are: 578

/75/ puna — an eruption characterized by itching and peeling of the skin, often in the groin, but found on the rest of the body as well (also known as Sekaseka or senga senga - Samoan?)

tane' — an eruption characterized by slight depigmentation, arising in spots and spreading over large areas

mama — an eruption characterized by numerous small round hard blisters developing on the lower legs and ankles, resembling in their appearance and order the chitons (mama) which appear on the rocks along [136]
the shore.

All these diseases are considered quite contagious (rere), 149
especially as a result of sexual intercourse. References are 578
commonly made to a newly developed skin condition as having [833]
come from a particular sexual episode. Those whose mates [753]
or lovers are afflicted with any of these diseases are subjected to severe ridicule at times, as the diseases, although common, are thought to be somewhat distasteful.

Conspicuously absent in the Marquesan obscene vocabu- 192
lary are references to female relatives of the addressed. Having 602
831

/114 cont./

in the eyes of their subjects, and soon the only leadership came from the French military and the missionaries. Christianity was literally forced upon the culture, as missionary efforts were backed up by military forces. The church acquired large land holdings, thus acquiring a powerful economic weapon for use against recalcitrants, and arbitrarily passed laws, as representative of the French government forbidding native dress, tattoo, religion, music, dancing and cosmetics. With the social organization already broken down, the population depleted by the epidemics of the late nineteenth century, and the culture robbed of vitality by missionary fiats, it was not long before complete demoralization set in and aboriginal Marquesan culture ceased to exist.

175 182 648 797

In view of the almost complete obliteration of native political organization, art, large areas of subsistence technology, and religion, it is not surprising that changes have also occurred in native sexual behavior. The radical changes in values and attitudes due to Christianization, the disappearance of many vital roles in the social system, and marked economic changes could not have been expected to leave this area of behavior unscathed. What is most surprising, however, is not that the sexual behavior changed, but that it changed so little! The tremendous amount of continuity in this area of behavior never ceased to amaze me, especially when compared to the all-encompassing changes in other /115/ aspects of the culture. The reason for the relatively good preservation of aboriginal sexual behavior is to be found in the bitterness and hostility of the native population, vis-a-vis the French administration and in particular the French missionaries. There are relatively few ways open to the Marquesan to express his hostility toward those who wield power over him, and gain some feeling of gratification. One method is through the use of the native language as a weapon, as discussed above. The unsuspecting white has no defense against a language he does not understand. This tactic cannot be used on the missionaries, however, as the use of the native language is mandatory for them. Therefore, some other technique must be adapted and it is in this

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context that sex is of great value. Of all the things most troublesome to the missionary, sexual misdeeds are near the top of the list; therefore, there is no better way to act out one's aggression than to continually transgress the rules laid down by the overlords. The transgressions are seldom brought to the attention of the missionary, by virtue of the fact that Marquesans do not consider truth in the confessional to be necessary, and a solid native front opposes missionary efforts to learn details of any misdeeds.

An excellent example of the effectiveness of this information blocking is the continual male invasion of the dormitories of the convent school in Hiva Oa, every night. [871] So far as could be determined, this has never come to the attention of the school authorities within the memory of anyone living, which is almost incredible when one considers the "gold-fish bowl" quality of life in any Marquesan community.

/116/ The strong antagonism to the mission can be 154
seen in the continual moral testing of these individuals carried 182
on by the native population. Constant probing for weak- 797
nesses in sexual mores, most often by women, if not success- 831
ful, results in a proliferation of fantasy imputing all sorts of sexual misconduct to the missionary involved. The slightest deviation by a missionary from an impossible set of moral standards set up by the natives is occasion for tremendous gossip and speculation about the state of the individual's moral decay. The relatively few actual faux pas committed by missionaries are remembered in almost clinical detail.

Thus, it appears that native sexual behavior has been 182
relatively well-preserved over the tragic period since the 831
French occupation at least, functioning as a form of passive resistance directed mainly at the mission, which [797] has played such a large role in the destruction of the native culture, a role the importance of which has by no means escaped the Marquesans of today. Despite the disappearance of the native religious, social and economic forms which gave much of this behavior meaning and integration in the